

Veterans News

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Gov. Schwarzenegger Presents Gold Star Family License Plates to Three Families Who Lost Sons in Iraq

Honors Members of the Armed Forces and Their Families

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger today joined California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) Secretary Roger Brautigan and Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Director George Valverde to present the first three Gold Star Family License Plates to the families of three men killed in the line of duty.

"The Gold Star Family License Plate is a reminder to all of us of those who have lost their lives while defending ours, and of their families who face each day without their loved ones," said Governor Schwarzenegger. "I am grateful to all who made this license plate possible, and may we never forget the courage, bravery and sacrifice of those in the Armed Forces."

The Governor presented the first three Gold Star Family License Plates to Mike Anderson, whose son Mike Anderson Jr. was killed in Iraq on December 14, 2004; Kevin and Leianne Graves, whose son Joey Graves was killed in Iraq on July 25, 2006; and to Dianne Layfield, whose son Travis Layfield was killed in Iraq on April 6, 2004.

"This is a recognition that is worthy of our efforts and is a small token for the families who have given so much to protect our nation our freedom," said Secretary Brautigan. "I am honored to have played a small part in this process."

"The Gold Star Family License Plate is an honor to those families whose family members paid the ultimate sacrifice," said DMV Director George Valverde. "The California DMV is proud to join with the Department of Veterans Affairs in making this recognition possible for thousands of families throughout California."

The Gold Star Family License Plate was [created](#) when the Governor signed [SB 1455](#) by Senator Dave Cogdill (R-Modesto) and Senator Jeff Denham (R-Merced) in 2008, which enables family members who have lost an active duty member of the U.S. Armed Forces in current and prior wars to obtain a Gold Star Family License Plate honoring the sacrifices their families have endured. This legislation directed the DMV to design a new license plate to be made available to Gold Star families. Under the provisions of the bill, the cost of setting up the program was to be covered by private donations collected by CalVet. The Department reached the designated amount of \$300,000 in donations and direct pledges this past November. As a token of the state's appreciation for their sacrifice, the legislation provides a special waiver of some fees for Gold Star families obtaining the plate.

Originally established after World War I, the Gold Star has come to symbolize the sacrifice a family makes when someone in their family is killed in the line of duty while serving in the U.S. Armed Forces.

The Gold Star License Plates include, on the left side, a Gold Star on a blue field surrounded by a wreath of small white stars; along the bottom of the plate, the words "Gold Star Family" in gold on a blue field; on the right corner, an image of a small folded American Flag.